Census data were used to make maps of the seven primary languages (other than English) most commonly spoken in four counties of Southeast Michigan. They reflect languages spoken in Macomb, Oakland, Wayne, and Washtenaw counties over a twenty-year period.

These maps were created by staff of the Stephen S. Clark Library, a new library combining the Spatial and Numeric Data Services, the Map Library, and the Government Documents Center. Also used in the creation of these maps was Social Explorer, a program for creating maps and reports from selected social sciences data. Social Explorer is available for use in the Clark Library or, for the MLibrary community, remotely. The maps were formatted using Adobe Illustrator, which is available for use in the Knowledge Navigation Center and the Faculty Exploratory.

Languages of South Asia in SE Michigan

Sometimes census data hide more than they reveal. The 1990 Decennial Census had a language category, Indic, for the languages of South Asia as a group. The 2000 Census and the American Community Survey 2005-2009 listed separately Hindi, Gujarati, and Urdu, and the rest were grouped as Other Indic. The maps on this panel do not include groups of languages, so the significance of the South Asian population in Southeast Michigan is obscured.

This chart shows where “Indic” would fall in 1990, 2000, and 2005-2009, if we were to group these languages together as they did in the 1990 Census. Over a hundred languages are spoken in South Asia, including Tamil, Bengali, and Punjabi. For an official list of the major languages of India, see the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India, in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_languages_of_India.